

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
Tel: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319



VANCOUVER OFFICE
401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2
Tel: 604-684-0231
Fax: 604-684-5726
1-800-793-9701
Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca
Web: www.ubcic.bc.ca

Statement

September 18, 2020

UBCIC Stands in Solidarity with the Mi'kmaq and Condemns Reprehensible, Unlawful Acts of Violence and Hostility against Mi'kmaq Fishers

((X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – September 18, 2020) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) strongly denounces the ongoing attempts by non-Indigenous fisherman to intimidate, threaten, and prevent Mi'kmaq fisher men and women from exercising their unextinguished and constitutionally affirmed fishing rights. These actions represent a serious and critical threat not only to the Mi'kmaq Nation's welfare and safety, but to the collective treaty rights and sovereignty of First Nations across the country.

Today, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs declared a State of Emergency in the wake of violence, threats, and human rights discrimination erupting over Mi'kmaq fisheries across Nova Scotia. Non-Indigenous fishermen have organized illegal protests meant to hinder and deny the fishing activities of the Mi'kmaq, including the Sipekne'katik Band's self-regulated lobster fishery. There are widespread reports of non-Indigenous fisherman harassing and threatening Mi'kmaq fishermen and engaging in other criminal activities, including the cutting of traps, the destruction of property, and intentionally ramming and shooting flares at Mi'kmaq boats. These dangerous actions channel and replicate the colonial-era violence associated with the systemic extinguishment and suppression of Indigenous Title and Rights. Attempts to deny or de-legitimize the Mi'kmaq right to earn a moderate livelihood from fishing is offensive and unlawful; these actions fundamentally violate the 1999 Supreme Court of Canada's decision to allow for fishing and trade activities, as recognized in the Mik'maq Treaties and protected by s.35 of the Canadian Constitution.

UBCIC fully supports the Sipekne'katik Nation's call for the federal DFO Minister, the Premier of Nova Scotia, and the RCMP to uphold the role of law regarding the unlawful hindrance of its members in exercising their legal fishing rights, and to prosecute any illegal protest or criminal

behavior from the commercial fishing industry. Government inaction and indecision must not bolster and condone the infringement of Mik'maq rights and further acts of hostility and violence.

UBCIC urges all relevant Ministers and government agencies to set an immediate, bold example in safeguarding the inherent rights of First Nations and enforcing strong repercussions for those who undermine them

-30-

Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, UBCIC: (250-490-5314)

Chief Don Tom, Vice-President, UBCIC: (250-813-3315)

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer, UBCIC: (604-785-3014)

UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca